

*Alston & Bird, an Am Law 50 firm with nine domestic and international offices, engaged HBR Consulting (HBR)'s Research + Information Solutions (RIS) team to assist the firm with strategic content sourcing and vendor negotiations.*

### CHALLENGE

Alston & Bird leverages a wide mix of content providers to service the information needs of the Firm's practice groups, attorneys, business development and competitive intelligence initiatives.

Tricia Thomas is the director of library services and oversees all library operations, materials and services and is responsible for evaluating and comparing the content of legal and business research products, firm-wide. While the Firm's attorneys and professionals require access to best-of-breed solutions, Thomas must ensure content sources are well-utilized and align with the Firm's investment strategy and deliver measurable ROI.

Thomas comments: "I was confident the HBR RIS team would deliver value for Alston & Bird by strategically sourcing content providers, negotiating competitive rates, determining utilization rates, and ensuring we were achieving value for our investments."

### APPROACH

Alston & Bird leveraged HBR's RIS team in a variety of service provider negotiations. As an influx of niche providers crowds the market, sourcing content providers becomes substantially more complex to perform due diligence.

In one particular instance, the Firm's Corporate Transactions practice group needed to determine the right content provider for SEC content needs. Several competing factors were at play, including price, attorney preferences and platform utilization. HBR's RIS team conducted a survey directly with the Firm's attorneys to assess preferences and drill into the details of platform features, and determine which was best suited for the attorneys, and why.

### OBJECTIVES

HBR's objective was to provide:

- **Strategic selection.** HBR's extensive due diligence assessed options to ensure the Firm's best interests were met while the attorneys were provided with the right, strategic solutions.
- **Consensus and alignment.** Attorneys' direct evaluations of the benefits of a wide range of choices were factored into a decision that aligned with the Firm's investment strategy.

HBR delivers advisory, managed services and software solutions that increase productivity and profitability, while mitigating risk for law firms, law departments and corporations. As trusted advisors with deep industry experience, clients partner with HBR to achieve significant, sustainable results.

### RESULTS + BENEFITS

The survey process empowered and engaged the Firm's attorneys. Working with HBR harnessed expertise in the service provider market, and as a result, Alston & Bird realized the following benefits:

- **Dual objectives.** The final selected platform was not only the most price-competitive, but has since delivered excellent utilization and ROI.
- **Strategic information management.** The Firm continued to assess and monitor investments in best-of-breed solutions, leveraging HBR's expertise. In a separate service provider offering, HBR identified a contract addendum that was not being adhered to and quickly advocated on the Firm's behalf to remedy the situation.

"Library services is about the strategic management of information and HBR's team is an invaluable, ongoing resource that I can tap into. As the firm continually assesses its investments in best-of-breed solutions, HBR is able to leverage their experience and tenure in the market to advocate on our behalf, negotiate the most competitive agreements, and monitor our ongoing utilization to ensure the contracts we achieve are delivered by our vendor partners."

– Tricia Thomas,  
Director of Library Services  
Alston & Bird